



# **Sexual Health During Pregnancy and After Delivery**

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# Overview

- **Sex during pregnancy**
- **Sex after delivery**
- **Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and Pregnancy**

# **Sexual Desire**

- **Your sexual desire (libido) may increase or decrease during pregnancy; both are normal**
- **Discuss these feelings with partner**
- **Accept how you're feeling**
- **Realize this is only temporary**

# **Physical Factors that Affect Desire and Sexual Pleasure**

- **Tiredness**
- **Morning Sickness**
- **Growing Abdomen**
- **Engorged Genitals**
- **Tender Breasts**
- **Leaking Breasts**
- **Bleeding**

# **Emotional Factors that Affect Desire and Sexual Pleasure**

- **Fear of causing miscarriage or hurting the fetus**
- **Fear of orgasm**
- **Fear of infection**
- **A mixed bag of feelings**

# Ways to Be Intimate

## ■ Try different positions for intercourse

- The side lying position
- Woman-top-position
- The man-behind position

## ■ Other ways to be intimate

- Manual stimulation
- Oral stimulation

# **Limit or Avoid Sex if:**

- **Advised by your doctor**
- **You have had pre-term labor or birth**
- **You have had more than one miscarriage**
- **You have placentia previa**
- **You have an infection**
- **You've had episodes of bleeding**
- **Breaking or leaking of the amniotic sac**
  - **Phone your ob/gyn immediately if this occurs**

# **Intimacy After Delivery**

- **Spend time together as a couple**
- **Keep the lines of communication open**
- **Don't rush sex**
- **There are many other ways to be intimate besides intercourse**



# **Intercourse After Delivery**

- **Give your body time to recover from childbirth**
- **Avoid having intercourse for at least 3-6 weeks after delivery of your baby**
  - **Your stitches (if you had any) should be dissolved and healed**
  - **Vaginal discharge/bleeding reduced or stopped**
- **Get on a reliable form of birth control**

# STDs & Pregnancy

- **STDs are viruses, bacteria, or parasites that pose risks or possible death to your baby**
- **Be honest and tell your health care provider, if you have or think you have an STD**

# Common STDs include:

■ **HIV(AIDS)**

■ **Gonorrhea**

■ **Syphilis**

■ **Chlamydia**

■ **Genital Herpes**

■ **Genital Warts**

■ **Hepatitis**

# **STDs & Pregnancy**

- **STDs can cause serious harm to your baby if left untreated**
- **During pregnancy, you can be tested for STDs**
- **Most STDs can be safely treated during pregnancy**
- **Protect yourself and your baby**
  - **Use condoms**
  - **Avoid sexual contact with an infected partner**
- **If you think you have been exposed to an STD, tell your health care provider immediately**

# Chlamydia

- **Possible effect on baby:** 20-50% chance of the baby becoming infected while passing through the birth canal resulting in a pneumonia or eye infection
- **Symptoms:** burning on urination or unusual vaginal discharge. women have no symptoms more than 50% of time
- **Testing:** Cervical culture at the time of your initial pap smear
- **Treatment:** Antibiotic pills for you, antibiotic ointment to baby's eyes at birth

# Gonorrhea

- **Possible effect on baby:** Baby can get conjunctivitis (redness of the eye), become blind and/or have a serious generalized infection
- **Symptoms:** Burning on urination, unusual vaginal discharge or no symptoms at all
- **Testing:** Cervical culture at the time of your initial pap smear
- **Treatment:** Antibiotic pills for you and an antibiotic ointment for the baby's eyes at birth

# Genital warts

- **Possible effect on baby:** Benign tumors on the vocal cords from the baby passing through an infected birth canal
- **Symptoms:** Skin tags or warts that can be small or large, soft or hard, raised or flat, single or in clusters like cauliflower
- **Testing:** Physical exam, let health care provider know if you think you have warts
- **Treatment:** Delay treatment until after delivery



# Hepatitis B

- Possible effect on baby: Liver damage and risk of death if passed to baby during the pregnancy
- Symptoms: Yellowing of the skin and eyes, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach and joint pain or extreme tiredness; sometimes there are no symptoms
- Testing: Blood test at initial visit
- Treatment: Vaccine, immune globulin, and a baby bath after delivery can help protect baby from getting infection



# Herpes Simplex Virus (Herpes)

- Possible effect on baby: Can cause severe disease and death if transmitted to your baby during delivery if you have sores/blisters near your delivery date
- Symptoms: Fluid-filled sores in the genital area that may itch, burn, tingle or cause pain
- Testing: Tell your health care provider immediately if you think you have an outbreak (looks like warts); cultures of the blisters can be done

# Herpes cont.

- **Treatment:** If active infection occurs at or near your delivery date, you may need a Cesarean Section within 4-6 hours of your water breaking
- **\*\*After birth, herpes can be passed to a baby by receiving a kiss from someone with a cold sore on the mouth (oral herpes)**

# **HIV** **(Human Immunodeficiency Virus)**

- **Possible effect on baby:** Infection can be passed to baby while pregnant, during birth or through breast-feeding; it can cause serious complications and death to baby
- **Symptoms:** Often there are no symptoms of HIV
- **Testing:** Blood test at initial visit
- **Treatment:** Medication called AZT® can decrease transmission to baby

# Syphilis

- Possible effects on baby: Miscarriage, stillbirth or damage to baby's bones, teeth and brain
- Symptoms: Painless sores in genital area
- Testing: Blood test at first visit
- Treatment: Antibiotics for the mother

# Trichomonas

- **Possible effects:** May increase chance of pre-term labor
- **Symptoms:** An increase in odorous, thin or thick, white, yellow-green/gray vaginal discharge and itching
- **Testing:** Vaginal discharge will be examined under a microscope
- **Treatment:** Flagyl® pills can be given safely after the first trimester

# Yeast Infection (Candidiasis)

- **Possible effect on baby:** Baby can get a mouth infection (thrush) while passing through an infected birth canal
- **Symptoms:** Vaginal itching, burning, or pain, which increases with urination and sex
- **Testing:** Your vaginal discharge will be examined under the microscope
- **Treatment:** Vaginal creams or suppositories for you, Nystatin® for your baby

# **STD Resources**

- **Prenatal Information Sheet: DoD Uncomplicated Pregnancy Clinical Practice Guideline, Patient Binder**
- **Partners for a Healthy Baby: Home Visiting Curriculum for Expectant Families 1999 Florida State University Center for Prevention and Early Intervention**



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